

March 21, 1974 - Secretary Kissinger, Press Conference

It is also true that the difficulties in the passage of MFN legislation and the threats to the credits raise some questions about understandings that the Soviet Union had every reason to believe were valid of what our purposes were, or what the United States would contribute for its side of the detente.

March 7, 1974 - Secretary Kissinger, Testimony Before
Senate Committee on Finance

I do not oppose the objective of those who wish to use trade policy to affect the evolution of Soviet society; it does seem to me, however, that they have chosen the wrong vehicle and the wrong context. We cannot accept the principle that our entire foreign policy -- or even an essential component of that policy such as a normalization of our trade relations -- should be made dependent on the transformation of the Soviet domestic structure.

I say this with some anguish, since both as an historian and as one whose own origins make him particularly conscious of the plight of minority groups, I would prefer that we could do otherwise.

But with respect to basic changes in the Soviet system, the issue is not whether we condone what the USSR does internally; it is whether and to what extent we can risk other objectives -- and especially the building of a structure for peace -- for these domestic changes. I believe that we cannot, and that to do so would obscure, and in the long run defeat, what must remain our overriding objective -- the prevention of nuclear war.

October 8, 1973 - Secretary Kissinger, Speech,
Pacem in Terris Conference

Should we now tie demands which were never raised during negotiations to agreements that have already been concluded? Should we require as a formal condition internal changes that we heretofore sought to foster in an evolutionary manner?

The demand that Moscow modify its domestic policy is a precondition for MFN or detente was never made while we were negotiating; now it is inserted after both sides have carefully shaped an overall mosaic. Thus it raises questions about our entire bilateral relationship.

Finally the issue affects not only our relationship with the Soviet Union, but also with many other countries whose internal structures we find incompatible with our own. Conditions imposed on one country could inhibit expanding relations with others, such as the People's Republic of China.

For half a century we have objected to communist efforts to alter the domestic structures of other countries. For a generation of Cold War we sought to ease the risks produced by competing ideologies. Are we now to come full circle and insist on domestic compatibility as a condition of progress?

September 26, 1973 - Secretary Kissinger, USUN Press Conference

Q. Mr. Secretary, this is not patently your talk with Andrei Gromyko, which you ruled out, but I would like to ask a question about his public speech in the Assembly, in which he demands that Western nations stop meddling in the internal affairs of the Soviet Union -- and I think something in connection principally with the emigration policy of the Soviet Union.

The manner in which he spoke of it left us uncertain as to whether this really meant any lessening of the spirit of detente or whether it was simply a public gesture in a private game. Could you --

A. Ladies and gentlemen, during my confirmation hearings, I was asked extensively about this issue. It is also an issue about which I plan to make a formal statement sometime in the next month or six weeks. But for now, let me reiterate what I said then.

The United States, of course, has its own deeply held views about the human values at stake -- both in emigration policies and in internal policies.

The foreign policy question we face is:

First, the degree to which our foreign policy can directly affect others.

And secondly, the alternatives we in fact confront if our direct actions are ineffective.

There is a great tendency to assume that everything that has been achieved is now automatically permanent and can be drawn upon as if its capital were inexhaustible.

We have taken the position that we would not, as a Government, take a formal, public position, but we have also taken the position that insofar as we have influence in other ways, we would use it to the limit of our capabilities.

- 2 -

Now you are all familiar with the fact that the emigration tax is not being enforced. On an unofficial basis we have brought many hardship cases that were submitted to us by various organizations here to the attention of various officials. Many of those have been permitted to emigrate.

So the choice we have to make is between a public stance and the influence that our general relationship gives us.

We believe that we have been quite effective. But we should keep in mind that there is a point beyond which one cannot press a situation as it exists.

Q. You say there is a point beyond which the detente should not be pressed. I wonder if you could outline what you think might happen if the Congress revokes or blocks the Most Favored Nation status for the Soviet Union in the new trade bill.

A. I don't want to speculate about Soviet actions. I have stated previously that the Most Favored Nation clause was part of a general arrangement with the Soviet Union in negotiations extending over a period of many years. If now the Most Favored Nation clause is blocked, then the most serious question has to be raised about the degree to which other countries -- in this case the Soviet Union -- can rely on a complex negotiation and about the performance of the United States, over a period of time, of its commitment. There was no reason to suppose at the time that this Most Favored Nation issue was discussed with the Soviet Union, that the type of problem that is now blocking it could be the subject of conditions in Congress. It had never been so used in any previous case where Most Favored Nation status was requested for a Communist country. Therefore, it would certainly be a significant setback in the policy that we are pursuing.